

INFLUENZA LAB SPECIMEN SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this program is to conduct enhanced surveillance for influenza and other respiratory viruses in the State of Indiana. Patients presenting with an influenza-like illness, defined as: fever greater than 100° and either cough or sore throat, should be selected for laboratory testing at the ISDH each week. The nasopharyngeal swabs collected for isolation should be **collected within 72 hours of onset of symptoms.**

You do not need to collect from every patient. Use your professional judgment to collect up to 4 specimens each day, Monday through Thursday, to send to the ISDH Labs.

STORAGE AND STABILITY:

- 1) Immediately upon viral isolation kit receipt, remove and freeze the refrigerant pack.
- 2) Store the cardboard box with the Styrofoam container and all the other components at room temperature until needed.
- 3) Do not use the transport medium beyond the expiration date. If your transport medium has expired, please discard and contact the ISDH Container Department at 317.921.5875 or e-mail (containers@isdh.IN.gov) to request a new lot number.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION:

- 1) The nasopharynx is the collection site of choice. Use the small swab on the stainless steel shaft for collecting the nasopharyngeal specimen.
- 2) Using aseptic technique, peel back the swab package and remove the swab.
- 3) Take a vigorous sample and place the swab in a tube of transport medium. Break off the shaft at the score and **secure the lid tightly.**
- 4) Label each tube with the patient's name and the collection date.
- 5) Complete an Influenza Lab Submission form for each specimen. Make sure the clinic address is complete.
- 6) Under refrigeration, promptly send to the laboratory for immediate processing. Remember to send specimens Monday through Thursday only.
- 7) Refrigerate the specimens if storing overnight. **Holding the specimens longer than 24 hours will decrease the chance for influenza isolation.**

TRANSPORTATION:

- 1) Wrap the specimen(s) in an absorbent pad and secure all specimens in the Ziplock-type bag.
- 2) Place the completed Influenza Lab Submission form(s) in the liner of the bag and enclose with the frozen pack in the Styrofoam container. Secure the box with packaging tape.
- 3) Complete the sender information on the FedEx Air Bill and affix the air bill to the box and call FedEx for pickup.

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